



Signal Soldiers hook up communications for troops fighting in Falujah.

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Red Team leads a Multi-National group to help stop rocket attacks during "Operation Rock Bottom."

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Thanksgiving events keep Taji troops busy, entertained and well fed.

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# Cav Country

Volume 1, Issue 17

"Telling the First Team's Story"

Dec. 11, 2004

## Sappers Reroute Streets Denying Enemy Access

**5th BCT Engineers Demolish Routes Used by Insurgents to Harrass Multi-National Forces**



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122 MPAD

Demolitions technicians of Company B, 8th Engineers, 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, used nearly 1000 pounds of cratering charges and plastic explosives to knock out two bridges. The intent was to deny freedom of movement to the enemy operating in southern Baghdad's rural areas. See story on pages 8 - 9.

### Maintaining Focus

## General Looks Back, Ahead at 1st Cav Mission

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP AL-TAHREER (LIBERTY), Baghdad, Iraq -- First comes Father Christmas, and then comes Father Time. As 2004 winds down and the holiday season brings on thoughts of home and hearth, the 1st Cavalry Division's commanding general said it's easy for Soldiers to lose focus on the mission at hand. But he warns against it... strongly.

"We're in an unforgiving environment," said Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division and Task Force Baghdad. "The only opportunity for you to let your guard down is after you've crossed the berm into Kuwait ... and even then you've got to stay focused to stay safe."

Combat operations aside, Chiarelli said the division has lost 12 Soldiers to non-combat related incidents and accidents this year.

"That's 12 too many," he said, shaking his head. "It's the job of leaders at all lev-

els to not only maintain their focus, but to ensure their Soldiers do the same."

That focus, the general said, has served the First Team well this year.

"The division has performed absolutely magnificently," Chiarelli said. "I don't think any of us thought that we would enter into the situation we did on the fourth



By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

An Abrams tank stands watch in front of the command post of Company C, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, which was attached to Task Force 2-7 Cavalry during the battle for Fallujah.

of April ... and it changed the way we had to look at the fight for the first couple of months. But we've maintained our focus with an understanding that our responsibility isn't to try to convince the people who already support us or the people who will never support us. We're looking after the people who are sitting on the fence, because they hold the balance of power over who's going to win this thing between the insurgents, former regime elements ... the terrorists and a free and democratic Iraqi government."

### Visible Progress

Chiarelli said he's pleased with the success that Task Force Baghdad has had in rebuilding the infrastructure of the Iraqi capital, even in the wake of combat operations.

"After fighting two major fights in two periods of time in Sadr City, we now have \$161 million in projects going and 16,000 people currently employed there," he said. "Down in Al Rashid, we've spent well over \$70 million in the four big areas - sewer, water, electricity and solid waste

disposal. We've put a lot of people to work and improved the lives of the people down there."

And the projects aren't limited to any single section of Baghdad.

"You name it, we've got projects going on throughout the city," Chiarelli noted. "[We'll have] ... well over \$1 billion [committed to projects] by the end of the year."

The general also noted the importance of helping local businesses sprout up in Baghdad, providing immediate employment for thousands while setting the stage for future economic growth.

Even as the division remains committed to rebuilding Baghdad in support of the interim Iraqi government, the general said that First Team troopers have stood firm against terrorists and insurgents throughout this deployment.

### Combat Warriors

Besides Sadr City, elements of the 1st Cav. Div. have been called upon to assist in combat operations in Najaf and Fallujah.

**See General, page 3.**

# Soldiers' Holiday Reflections from the Front

Soldiers really are a special breed. "I'm not looking for a fight," said Sgt. Aaron Seigel, an infantry team leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. "I just do what I have to."

He made that comment to me while we were standing on a rooftop overlooking the last push by U.S. Marines against dug in insurgents in a southwestern neighborhood in Fallujah last month.

## We just do what we have to do.

I've been thinking about his words, as the holiday season approaches. A year ago, we all knew we were coming to Iraq. The reasons we're here have been debated ad nauseum back home as America held its national elections.

But does it matter why we're here? Most Soldiers I've talked to, don't ponder the reasons why we're here; at least not very often. The day-to-day reality of the mission at hand gives us all enough to worry about.

Spc. Richard Kinney is an automatic rifleman with 2-7 Cavalry. I asked him what he thought about Iraq ... and the Iraqi people. He just shrugged off the question.

"I don't think about that much," he said. "I just want me and my guys to get back home safe."

## We care for each other.

Line units seem to have a great affection and affinity for each other in times like these. The shared dangers and deprivations of their

## Commentary

Master Sgt.  
Dave Larsen

1st Cav. Div.  
Public Affairs



daily duties bring about a close-knit pattern of life for these troops. They laugh and joke, and swap stories as they play cards between missions.

But we all can appreciate the concept of sharing: like the care packages our families send, which end up at work, divided up among our friends and colleagues. It's about giving something to those who don't have it, and (in the case of sweets and food stuffs) to also avoid putting on 20 pounds in one sitting.

Mail call, even far from the relative safety of forward operating bases, reaches our Soldiers no matter where the mission takes them, keeping them connected with loved ones.

Scranton, Penn. native Spc. Tommie Anuszewski is a Chicago Bears fan and a member of 2-7 Cavalry. His name came out several times during a mail call in downtown Fallujah, though his squad affectionately refers to him only by the first four letters of his name.

Faces light up as letters are passed out. Somebody out there loves us ... even Chicago Bear fans.

## We fight when we have to.

When the mission is at hand, when danger lurks, a mask of tight-lipped concentration and determination replaces the laughter. A deadly seriousness sets in their eyes.

You can call it their "game face." It's all business.

After the missions, when it's time to

wind down and reflect, it's sometimes a struggle to put things into words ... let alone perspective.

Sgt. Willie Hudgen is an infantry team leader with Company A, 2-7 Cavalry. He fought in Najaf in August. He fought again with the lead element spearheading the Marines' push into Fallujah last month. I asked him what the difference was between the two fights.

"You know," he said, after pausing for what seemed like an eternity to reflect on his answer, "there really is no difference. It's just ... war."

## The (Cav) spirit can move you.

The Christmas season is a holy experience for most Christians, and a festive time for most Americans, regardless of their religious upbringing. Memories of Rudolph, Frosty and Kris Kringle television specials (which, most of us own now on DVD ... at least those of us with kids) are rekindled at this time of year. Christmas carols and Christmas classics play on the radio, and sometimes in our heads without thinking.

Christmas is about families and family traditions. It's also the hardest time of the year for many of us to be separated from loved ones.

It takes a special breed to sacrifice hearth and home. Even though we do not have the comforts of home here, it's comforting to me, at least, to have one another.

We share a common bond. We are Soldiers ... and we're the First Team.

When passing a Soldier and getting the greeting of the day, the deputy division chaplain, Chaplain (Maj.) Grant Johnson snaps his salute and gives a deep-throated reply which lets you know his line of work: "First Team ... for God!" he'll exclaim.

Even the religiously indifferent smile at that response, but it has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes.

When the bullets and rockets are flying, that just may still be true. God only knows. Merry Christmas. (And, Go Packers!)



By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

On the rooftop of his company command post in the heart of Fallujah, Sgt. Aaron Seigel reflects on the mission there. "I'm not looking for a fight," the infantry team leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment said. "I just do what I have to."

# Spur The Moment

Photos by Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

"I'm thankful for the support of family back in Las Vegas."



SPC Emelia Loya  
Company D, 312th MI  
from Las Vegas, Nev.

"I am thankful for my wife and all of the support that I have back home. Also that our whole company has not had any casualties."



SSG Brent Homan  
Company B, 2-7 Cav.  
from Sioux City, Iowa

# "What are you thankful for?"

"I am thankful for the Lord's blessing and for having a family that loves me and supports me."



CPT Jose Lemus  
2-82 FA  
from Calexico, Calif.

"I am thankful for the support of friends and family because without them we couldn't be over here doing what we need to do."



2LT Josh Southworth  
Company A, 3-8 Cav.  
from Erie, Pa.

"I'm just really thankful I have some good guys to rely on and have a nice cohesive unit."



SPC Matthew Haynes  
F Troop, 9th Cav.  
from Las Vegas, Nev.

"I give thanks to God, my family and my support group."



SFC Tawana Encalade  
HHC, 3rd Bde  
from Pittsburgh, Pa.

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## General Reminisces, Refocuses

**From General, page 1.**  
They have been very successful.

"The same two battalions went both times ... 1-5 and 2-7 Cavalry," Chiarelli said. "We did that, initially for Najaf, because they were the ones that we could thin out the line, so to speak, with because they'd done such a good job in their sectors in Baghdad."

"They went down and made such a name for themselves in Najaf with the Marines that the Marines asked for them again ... by name [for Fallujah]," he said.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team also went to deal with insurgents in Fallujah, where First Team units worked in and around the city to rid it of insurgents.

"2-7 [Cavalry] went to work directly for the Marines," Chiarelli said. "It's just proof of the quality of Soldiers that we have. I don't think we should forget the great contributions made by the pilots of our 4th Brigade. 4th Brigade went and supported both operations and I know the guys on the ground would be the first to tell you that if it wasn't for the 4th Brigade

and the bravery of their pilots, our losses would have been much higher than they were in both of those fights."

### Looking Ahead

Chiarelli said the Iraqi national election, still set for Jan. 30, is the next major hurdle for the First Team.

"I think it's going to be a monumental task to run elections in a country of 25 million people where you expect voter turn out to be in the vicinity of 85 to 90 percent," the general said. - "Right now, we're in a support role, but I tend to believe as we get closer and closer to the elections we're going to be asked to do more and more. Such as provide additional security ... logistical support ... always in support of the Iraqis."

Putting the upcoming elections in perspective, Chiarelli pointed to the images of Americans standing in line to vote in November. He expects the Iraqi elections to be just as busy, if not more so.

"We all saw the election back home," Chiarelli said. "We had one of the biggest turn outs of all time. We saw the lines,

and we had electronic voting machines and state-of-the-art stuff. Here, they have far less, but they're not going to have 60 percent turn out to vote. They're going to have 85 to 90 percent turn out, and we're going to do it all in a 10-hour period on the 30th of January."

### Hope for 2005

Not wanting to look too far ahead, the First Team's commanding general said his greatest hope for the coming year is that his troopers maintain their focus ... their edge.

"Good things will flow from that," Chiarelli said. "I want a smooth redeployment; I want safety for all of my Soldiers; I want to turn over our sector to the 3rd Infantry Division in the proper way. I want all those things, and the way that we do that is to maintain our focus. We maintain our focus by doing what we've been doing the whole time we've been here -- doing what's right -- right for our Soldiers, right for the Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division, right for the Iraqi people and right for the Iraqi government."

## MNF-I Announces 2BCT Extension

CAMP AL-TAHREER (LIBERTY) Baghdad, Iraq -- A request by the Multi-National Force - Iraq Commander, Gen. George Casey, the senior military commander in Iraq, to temporarily increase the U.S. military force posture in Iraq has been approved by the Department of Defense and will affect the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division as well as a few other select units.

This decision was made in coordination with the Interim Iraqi Government.

This action is taken to maintain the momentum gained during Operation Al Fajr, to keep the insurgents off balance and to set the conditions for successful elections Jan. 30.

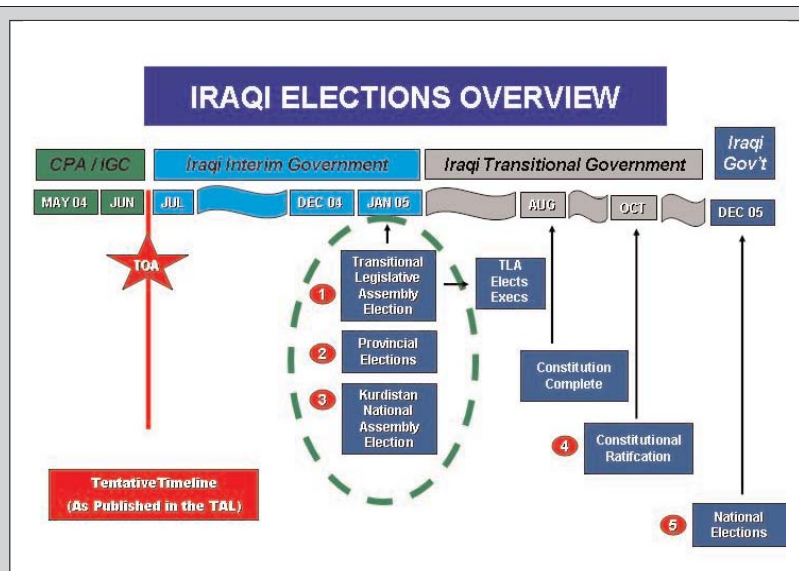
Force posture changes will take advantage of a "window of opportunity" following successful operations in Fallujah. This temporary measure complements continuing increases in Iraqi Security Force strength.

"It is important that we understand this temporary

measure will give the MNF-I commander experienced units for post-Fallujah operations, and will provide additional security for the January elections," said Lt. Col. James Hutton, the 1st Cavalry Division public affairs officer.

In addition to the 2nd Brigade (Black Jack), 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas; the United States Army's 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; and the United States Marine Corps' 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa, Japan, will be extended beyond their current rotation dates. This extension also includes the 66th Transportation Company, based out of Kleber Kasern, Germany. The length of extension varies between the units.

Two battalions from the 82nd Airborne Division will deploy to Iraq for an anticipated duration of approximately 120 days to support security efforts during the upcoming election period.



- The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq is responsible for conducting Iraqi Elections
- The first national election is for a 275-person Legislature, that will draft a new Iraqi Constitution
- MNF-I will only provide support that is REQUESTED by the Iraqis AND will do nothing that could be seen as influencing Iraqi elections

## Stay Informed About Coming Iraqi Elections

### DOs

- DO appear completely NEUTRAL in all matters relating to the Iraqi Elections
- DO hand out Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq-approved election information materials when Iraqis ask you about Iraqi Elections (if provided) AND
- DO refer Iraqis with election questions to their local Independent Election Commission of Iraq office (when established) or [WWW.IECIRAQ.ORG](http://WWW.IECIRAQ.ORG)
- DO follow published Rules of Engagement (ROE)
- DO report all observed "political" gatherings to your chain-of-command
- DO follow Unit SOPs regarding contact with the media
- DO continue to follow all Force Protection rules

### DON'Ts

- DON'T appear to favor any Iraqi parties or candidates (remain neutral)
- DON'T appear to dislike any Iraqi candidate or party
- DON'T enter into "political" debates about Elections
- DON'T gather near registration or polling centers, UNLESS directed to do so by your chain-of-command
- DON'T interfere with Iraqi political gatherings
- DON'T interfere with media coverage of Iraqi Elections

## Clearing Sadr City

By Spc. Jan Critchfield  
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-WATANI (PATRIOT), Baghdad, Iraq -- As a part of the 1st Cavalry Division's efforts to secure unstable Sadr City neighborhoods, Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team "Ironhorse" are working non-stop to clear improvised explosive devices that obstruct a planned \$360 million of U.S.-funded infrastructure projects in the area.

In an effort to make the streets safer for both Soldiers and civilians, the 766th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), an Army unit from Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., and the 20th Engineer Battalion has been working together to reduce the IED threat in eastern Baghdad.

Although some insurgent cells that had operated in the area removed IEDs as outlined in a recent agreement with the Iraqi

government, the devices continue to be found by military patrols and Iraqi Security Forces, with hundreds potentially hidden beneath the asphalt.

"Some of the locals in the area did report that the day before [people in trucks] had gone in and removed some of the IEDs," said Capt. Marc Distefano, commander of Company A, 20th Engineers during an IED disposal mission. "Still, there are some IEDs that are ... too dangerous for civilians to remove."

An October Iraqi government-run weapons buyback program gave insurgent groups in Sadr City the opportunity to disarm. Hundreds of explosives, mines and artillery shells used to make IEDs were recovered, which the 766th then disposed of at a safe location. Although the program was largely successful, IEDs that have already been planted still remain a threat.

Making the job of finding IEDs a little bit easier, local residents regularly tell 1st BCT patrols of explosives that have been installed near their homes. Such intelligence, combined with other sources, is then compiled into a list of potential 'targets' for the 766th and the 20th to neutralize during daily missions.

"It's promising to see that people realize we're here to help," Distefano said.

Improvements to the living conditions of other areas of Baghdad have often correlated with a decrease in insurgent activity, making clearing IEDs in Sadr City an essential step towards stability in the region.



(Above) A Soldier with the 766th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) remotely detonates a potential IED in eastern Baghdad.



(Left) Another Soldier of the 766th Ordnance Co. helps deploy a robot carrying an explosive charge used to destroy a potential IED during an IED disposal mission in eastern Baghdad.



Photos by Spc. Jan Critchfield, 122nd MPAD

A military policeman (right) points out a potential IED to 2nd Lt. Jerald Kubicek, leader of Company A, 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team.

## Ironhorse Brigade Begins Reconstruction of Bombed Bridge

By Spc. Jan Critchfield  
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-WATANI (PATRIOT), Baghdad, Iraq -- On Nov. 11, a white pickup truck carrying explosives was parked on the Diyala River Bridge, one

of three major bridges in the Al-Thawra District. The truck exploded killing a cargo-truck driver and wounding a dozen others in addition severely damaging the bridge. The blast destroyed one lane of the bridge and blocked the other with the smoldering remains of

the explosion. The bridge was unusable except by pedestrians desperate enough to straddle a narrow passage between the charred truck and a gaping hole in the deck of the bridge, with the murky waters of the Diyala below.

"Insurgents are targeting major infrastructure sites, like bridges," said Capt. Marc Distefano, Company A commander, 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "In April of last year, insurgents put shape charges on the Diyala River Bridge ... and destroyed parts of it."

Working rapidly, Company A had one lane of the Diyala River Bridge open for traffic within 48 hours. A few weeks later, a local contractor finished patching the other lane. That quick turnaround is something Company A hopes to repeat, Distefano said.

"There are a lot of old people, handicapped people, children that are walking across this rubble to get to the other side to get to work, to go to church, to go to school, and it's severely inconvenienced them, and made a daily chore very dangerous," Distefano said.

Company A already had \$200,000 in renovations planned for the bridge,

including \$120,000 going into improving the bridge's deck subsequently damaged in the bombing.

"The bridge constantly needed maintenance," Distefano said. "Alpha company had been out there at least six times to do minor repairs with the tools

**"Insurgents are making [Iraqi's] lives harder, and this project is a visible sign that [Multi-National forces] are trying to help them"**

**- Capt. Marc Distefano**

we have. The decision was made to replace all the decking on the bridge with a little more sturdy material and lay asphalt over the top so it wouldn't come apart so much."

Construction started Nov. 15, and is scheduled for completion by the first week of December.

"The thing we want to impress upon the people of Baghdad is that the insurgents are making their lives harder, and this project is a visible sign that [Multi-National forces] are trying to help them, and help the country move in the right direction."



By Spc. Jan Critchfield, 122nd MPAD

A truck destroyed by an insurgent car bomb blocks a bridge spanning the Diyala River. \$200,000 in renovations had been planned for the bridge before the Nov. 11 bombing.



# Black Jack

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## Black Jack 6 Recounts Mission in Fallujah

By Spc. Al Barrus  
122nd MPAD

FALLUJAH, Iraq -- Even with the majority of combat operations over and victory declared, elements of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division in Fallujah remain persistent in dealing with the aftermath.

The cavalry brigade's combat power was needed in the 10,000-troop assault on Fallujah named 'Operation Phantom Fury,' according to 2nd BCT 'Black Jack' commander, Col. Michael Formica.

"We brought the armored protection and mounted combat fire power to the fight," Formica said. "We could penetrate inside the city with the tanks and the Bradleys, take the sniper fires, take the [rocket-propelled grenade] fires and destroy the buildings with direct fire. The key piece we brought was precision combat power with our Abrams and Bradleys."

He said the Black Jack mission now is truly cavalry: noting the fact that his team is tracking down the remaining enemy forces.

"This brigade will have a prominent role in what we consider in cavalry terms, a pursuit operation," Formica said. "We will hunt down the enemy and destroy him before he can reestablish operations."

"We don't know where the enemy is going. Many of them



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Wilen Hopkins, a machine gunner in 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, scans countryside just north of Fallujah. The 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team's mission involves maintaining a cordon around the besieged city while Marines and other elements weed out remaining insurgents.

and brought cavalry power to the fight in the city. Having the cavalry in the attack was a necessity in Fallujah because the type of enemy they fought here, he said.

"This enemy is well equipped, apparently well trained and well organized," Formica said. "They fought us pretty much straight up: a staunch opponent."

"The enemy was trying to get out of the city, but when he couldn't he returned fire; then we had an opportunity to defeat him."

The primary 2BCT mission continues outside the city, taking care of the insurgents who try to

escape, the colonel explained.

"The mission here was to isolate Fallujah so the enemy could not reinforce his positions," Formica said. "Surround the town, keep them in, and keep them out so the 1st [Marine Division] could attack the enemy."

Black Jack's commander said many of the attached units who assisted his brigade's cordon mission during the initial assault, which began early November, have since relocated. But as Multi-National Forces round up insurgent hardliners still in Fallujah, 2BCT will remain to keep the cordon around the city.

Three days into the operation, 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment had to leave the Black Jack cordon mission. The 2BCT 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry's combat power has since been stretched, Formica said.

"We had to spread 1-5 Cav across 55 kilometers and they are doing a fantastic job," the Pennsylvania native said. "They have been there 24-7 for the last ten days. They are holding the line to enable this attack and final operations to be completed."

Insurgent forces who manage to escape Fallujah are likely to move to Baghdad, according to Formica.

"What happens in Fallujah, I believe will have a direct effect on Baghdad. We have seen, historically, the enemy moves from west

to east into the capital," he said.

"What we can destroy or capture here will ultimately lead to better circumstances in Baghdad proper."

As the brigade keeps the cordon around Fallujah, they are helping to usher in a new phase of operations there.

"We have the most important part of this operation," he said, "which is the humanitarian part of the effort and to help the people of Fallujah have their city given back to them after it's been liberated of the terrorists."

Formica said security will play a significant role in bringing aid into the Fallujah area.

"Nothing goes into that city without being inspected," the colonel said. "We will make sure that what goes in is genuine humanitarian supplies and is not contraband or munitions or things that may be used against us. By all accounts things are going well as far as humanitarian efforts."

Once Fallujah and the surrounding Al Anbar province has been liberated, Multi-National Forces will give it back to its people, according to Formica, where they can commence with elections.

"Rebuilding the city will be a big job, but in the end it will belong to the people of Fallujah," Formica said. "All the horrors and all the tortures and all the inhumane things that took place in that city in the last six months are behind them. The rest is physical

## 13th Signal Soldiers Help to Keep Fallujah-Based Troops Connected

By Spc. Al Barrus  
122nd MPAD

FALLUJAH, Iraq -- The U.S. Army is one that communicates. Taking advantage of everything from telephones, radio and the Internet is how a fighting force stays on top. In Fallujah, it's how the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division fights the good fight, and does it well. Company B, 13th Signal Battalion is the unit that makes it happen.

"One of the things that makes our Army so strong is we are able to do more with less," said Capt. Robert Seal, Company B commander 13 SIG. "With this technology we can communicate and see each other on the battlefield."

Thanks to the troops who set up the antennas, satellite dishes, computer networks and more; communications are loud and

clear throughout the Army's role in Fallujah, Seal said.

With the systems in place, the ground troops can not only see where they are in the city, but where their teammates are, he said.

"A good day is a very boring day," he said. "That means nothing broke and our customers are happy."

Some systems rarely break down, he said. But others are known to have regular problems, and the system can always be improved.

"We have to fine tune the signal and make sure it's strong," said Spc. Blake Criswell, a network systems operator, Company B, 13 SIG. "It will affect how well you can hear the phones, and how fast data will pass through the computers."

When there is nothing to fine tune or maintain some of the Soldiers in Company B find

other ways to help people communicate.

Next to where the company is set up outside of Fallujah, live the Marines. The signal troops get the chance to bring the gift of communication to them as well, on a more casual level.

"The Marines next door have it a lot harder than us," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Stephen, a section chief in Company B, 13 SIG. "Till we came out here, some of them hadn't called their families in a couple months. So we hook them up with a ... phone when they ask. Now they can talk to their wives and kids back home."

In the field and on the 'lines,' Company B is proud to keep the troops in Fallujah in touch.

"We install the power and do our magic. We bring in the link," Seal said. "Frankly, they couldn't do the mission with out us."



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Jonathan Jenney, a network systems operator, Company B, 13th Signal Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, troubleshoots faults in his tactical satellite van. He makes adjustments to improve phone and Internet communication between Fallujah and Baghdad.

## Stuffed Toys Fill the Grasp of Kindergarten Kids

By Staff Sgt. Susan German  
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-TAWHEED AL-AWAL (UNION I), Baghdad, Iraq -- Pick up any child's favorite stuffed toy and there is usually a story behind how he came to own it. Keeping small mementos which remind us of a special event or time in our life or bring us comfort are a common practice which doesn't diminish as one crosses cultural borders.

A delivery of goodwill came in the form of stuffed animals; there were several boxes of Beanie Babies and other small stuffed toys received through the chaplain's office at the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, intended to be distributed to local Iraqi kids.

Soldiers from A Company, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, and Detachment 1, 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery Regiment, attached to Company A, 1-153rd, delivered the stuffed animals, along with school supplies, to children at the Ayn Al Mali Kindergarten in the Babil neighborhood of Baghdad Nov. 20.

As the convoy arrived at the school, a scruffy looking dog walked along the roofline, barking as the Soldiers approached but otherwise posing no threat as he peered at them from his lofty vantage point. Soldiers maintained their guard on the street running in front of the school.

While other Soldiers set up the dis-

tribution point inside the school's lobby, the children sang the alphabet song; reciting the entire English alphabet flawlessly, and then sang several Arabic songs for their guests. They clapped their hands and pumped their small fists in the air, acting out the words to the songs.

When it came time to hand out the stuffed animals, the older kids came forward confidently as the teachers assisted the younger children lining up in the school's lobby, urging each one forward to receive a stuffed animal from the Soldiers.

As a light infantry unit, Soldiers of 1-153 are accustomed to performing infantry type tasks, said 1st Lt. Ronnie Denton the executive officer and acting commander of A Company.

"It's been different than what we ever expected," the Hatfield, Ark. native said. He said they've learned to adapt during this tour in Iraq and have been conducting civil military operations missions along with their more traditional raids and patrols.

Denton credits their level of patience and the experience many bring from civilian jobs back at home to their duties in Iraq.

"Right now it seems to be working, we've had very little activity in our area in the last few months," he said. "We're very pleased with what we're doing."

Other school supplies, including pens, pencils and crayons, were donated by the Valley View Missionary

Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Ark., through Capt. David Hastings, the battalion's fire support officer.

After the toys were all passed out, the headmistress of the school gave the Soldiers a tour; through classrooms, a small library with numerous American books, and past a courtyard "zoo" with several chickens and a rabbit.

The visits to the schools are intend-

ed to improve relationships, as well as communications, with community members.

"The kids go home and say U.S. Soldiers gave me this; hopefully the people on the street will stop U.S. Soldiers [to give them] any intelligence they might have about insurgents in the area," said 1st Lt. Samuel Wigley, fire support officer, Det. 1, 1-206th FA Bn.



By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

Children at the Ayn Al Mali Kindergarten entertained Soldiers with several songs prior to the distribution of stuffed animals by Soldiers of A Company, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, and Detachment 1, 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery Regiment, attached to A Co., 1-153 Inf., 3rd Brigade Combat Team, at the Ayn Al Mali Kindergarten in the Babil neighborhood of Baghdad Nov. 20.

## Army Captain to Root for Navy in 105th Meeting

By Sgt. John Queen  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

CAMP AL-TAWHEED AL-AWAL (UNION I), Baghdad, Iraq -- Take a look at any brigade headquarters company in the Army and chances are you'll find it's staffed with a number of officers that graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point.

A closer observation of Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq finds something a little different mixed in with its U.S. Military Academy alumni; graduates of the United States Air Force and Naval Academies.

Capt. Larry Edell and Capt. Sam Chanoski both transferred their commissions upon graduation from their respective academies to join the Army.

"I originally wanted to go Air Force," said Chanoski a liaison officer for the 3rd BCT and a 1999 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. "I did some researching on West Point, too, because I thought the Army was cool. I really didn't know anything about West Point other than they wore those little monkey uniforms."

Chanoski applied and was

accepted to both West Point and the Air Force Academy. "I didn't even consider the Navy because I really don't like boats and the water."

"It almost came down to the toss of a coin between the Air Force and West Point," he added. "I ended up going to the Air Force because from what I knew as a 16-year-old high school kid, they had a much better practical education program than West Point and that's what I thought I was interested in at the time."

Edell, the brigade's trial counsel also said his original goal was to attend the Air Force Academy.

"My parents encouraged me to apply at Annapolis and West Point, as well," he recalled. "I figured I might change my mind so I visited

all three academies to see."

After checking out all three, Edell decided to apply at West Point and Annapolis instead of the U.S. Air Force Academy. Due to a medical condition, however, he was only accepted to the Naval Academy.

"When I found out I could still get commissioned in the Army when I graduated from Annapolis I transferred my commission," Edell said. "It seemed like the natural thing to do: I'm an Army brat, and I had a lot of good experiences growing up with the Army."

Chanoski said his switch to the Army was an easy decision as well.

"I knew I couldn't fly or be a navigator because my eyes were too bad," Chanoski noted. "When I

joined the military, I wanted to be on the pointed end of the spear. I filled out the paperwork for a transfer, showed up at Fort Benning a few months later and never looked back.

Though most of their peers think they went to West Point or attended a Reserve Officer's Training Course (ROTC) program in college, some find out about Edell and Chanoski's military beginnings, razzing them with playful taunts by calling them "Zoomy" or "Squid."

The pair just passes them off as dumb "Grunts."

As the 105th Army-Navy game draws near, school and service rivalries ignite for the service academy grads of the 3rd BCT.

"It's not always pretty and it's not the best college football game out there," Edell said. "[But] ... it does represent a bunch of people playing with all their heart and giving it all they can."

"The thing about the Army-Navy game is records don't matter," adds Capt. Alan Boyer, assistant operations officer for the brigade and a 1996 graduate of West Point. "It's such a great game. It's the best college rivalry in football ... football in general. You never know who's going to win."

One thing sticks in Edell's mind when he reflects back on his

days at the Naval Academy: sitting in the stands and watching Army beat Navy.

"I'm a graduate of the class of 1996, also," Edell said. "We lost the Army-Navy game all four years I was there. It still sticks in my gut."

Navy has done better this year because of their new coach, Boyer said. But he and Edell agree: you never know with this game.

"You just never know what's going to happen," Boyer said. "My class went 4-and-0. Two of them were one-point games, won on the last play of the game."

"Or lost," Edell chimed in.

Although Edell has been in the Army for eight years he said he still bleeds blue and gold for his Annapolis alma mater.

"I still root for Navy much to the dismay [of my colleagues]," Edell said.

Chanoski said the story is the same for him, when Air Force plays Army he roots for Air Force.

"In most previous years it didn't make a difference, Air Force would walk all over them," Chanoski said, "... unfortunately, not this year."

If Navy wins this year, Edell plans on doing a lot bragging.

"If they lose, I'll be laying low," he said. "I'm kind of out numbered here."



By Sgt. John Queen, 3rd BCT Public Affairs

Capt. Sam Chanoski, Alan Boyer and Larry Edell



# Warriors

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## 4th BCT Pilots Fly Unusual Soccer Ball Delivery

Cpl Benjamin Cossel  
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Football inspires a love and passion around the world rivaled by few sports. As witnessed by the recent national unity and outpouring of support for the Iraqi Olympic Football team, football in Iraq is a unifying force. Of course, in the United States, we call it soccer.

Kiowa Pilots of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division have found a unique way to deliver goodwill and foster a sense of kinship with the people of Iraq through their love of football ... or soccer. As the "Warriors" take to the air, flying their normal missions, they've begun dropping soccer balls from their aircraft as they fly overhead, a little thing they've dubbed "Operation Soccer Ball."

"It all started with the Col. (Brigade Commander Col. James McConville) and I dropping bags of candy from our Kiowa as we flew by," explained Kiowa Pilot Chief Warrant Officer Rolf Giesler, 4th BCT.

"You couldn't help but notice that every single soccer field we flew over was packed, and it wasn't just kids, everyone it seemed, was out there playing soccer," the Seattle, Wash. native said.

The constant presence of people on the fields gave McConville the idea to add to their normal candy drops.

"The 'ole man' says to me one day, 'Rolf, I really think we should start dropping soccer balls out there.' So we did," Giesler said.



By Chief Warrant Officer Chris Wilson, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

A 4th Brigade OH-58D 'Kiowa Warrior' patrols the skies of Baghdad.

The draw of soccer has not escaped the notice of commanders within the First Team. Routinely, civil affairs and regular patrols depart the gates of their bases with the backs of their vehicles filled with soccer balls. They are adorned with the 1st Cav. Div. patch emblazoned on the ball next to a depiction of Iraq, with the Arabic words "Peace and Prosperity for a Unified Iraq."

Giesler worked with members of the Brigade's logistics section to procure balls from the local economy. As the success of each drop became more and more apparent, the operation began growing legs, spreading to other pilots within the brigade.

"All Kiowa pilots within 1-7 (1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry) and 1-25 (1st Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment) now regularly try and take a dozen or so balls out whenever they fly," he said.

To be sure, the soccer ball delivery is an add-on to the pilots' regular missions.

Opportunity and timing must come together in order for a delivery to happen.

"Right now, we're just doing this when we can, when the opportunity presents itself and there are some rules we stick with," Giesler explained.

The rules, he said, are fairly basic: The mission comes first; don't put yourself in a hazardous situation; and finally, never toss a soccer ball into an area that could get someone hurt.

"You try and drop the balls in an area where the word of what we are doing will spread, usually in the more impoverished areas, where families can't afford to buy a ball for themselves," Giesler said. "I really think we've started to develop a relationship between those villages we drop balls at and the Kiowas."

Giesler and other Kiowa pilots have noticed a change in people's opinions since they began delivering soccer balls, a testa-

ment to the operations success.

"When we first started flying out here, people would put their hands over their ears, throw rocks at us or run inside afraid," said Chief Warrant Officer Sonny Hinchman, a Worthington, Ind. native and Kiowa pilot with 4th BCT. "Now when they see the Kiowa's coming, they run after us, looking for those soccer balls."

Even as word spreads of the soccer balls from the sky, an awkward moment from time to time presents itself.

"I remember this one time," chuckled Hinchman, "when we came down, ready to drop a few balls and we see this kid standing off in the distance. He had his arm cocked back to his ear, just ready to hurl a rock at us. I pulled one of the balls out and tossed it to him. The kid just stood there for a second, like he really wasn't sure what to do, but then he dropped that rock, grabbed the ball and gave us the thumbs up. That was cool."

So far, Giesler estimates over 160 soccer balls have been dropped with a thousand procured locally and more on the way.

"After this thing took off, we started getting donations from companies back in the states," he said. "So we got a lot of soccer balls to give out."

The deliveries have been such a success that there is talk within the brigade of making the drops a regular mission.

"The absolute best part of all this, is just seeing the looks on the kids face when they grab a ball," Hinchman said. "It really makes you feel good."

## Camp Taji Celebrates Thanksgiving, Grand Openings

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel  
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Soldiers on Camp Taji had a lot to celebrate on a day full of Thanksgiving activities with the grand opening of a new Post Exchange and Dining Facility Nov. 25.

The new exchange boasts 29,000 square feet of retail space, according to store manager Jason Rosenberg.

"While this may make us only the second largest exchange in all of Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. "It does make us the exchange with the largest amount of actual retail space."

Rosenberg added that the additional space gave the exchange the ability to add merchandise that previous locations on Camp Taji were unable to accommodate.

"We've been able to double the amount of merchandise in every section of this store with our new location," Rosenberg said. "Before, we focused on the essential items like hygiene products and a few luxury items. Now, we have the ability to offer a full range of electronics, DVDs, gaming systems and other items to make the Soldiers stay here a little bit better."

The construction of the facility took over two months to complete with employees and contractors working through the night to ensure the store's opening in conjunction with the Thanksgiving holiday.

"It was very important for us to be ready to open our doors on Thanksgiving," Rosenberg explained. "Traditionally, the day after Thanksgiving is the largest shopping day of the year and we wanted to make sure we were open so Soldiers could feel a little

bit at home, doing their Christmas shopping and just have a good experience with the holiday."

Along with Rosenberg, Brig. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the assistant division commander-support for the 1st Cavalry Division and Brig. Gen. Ronald Chastain, the commanding general of the 39th Brigade Combat Team, cut the ceremonial yellow ribbon signaling the opening of the facility.

Not to be outdone in pomp and circumstance, immediately following the exchange opening was the opening of the newest dining facility in Iraq.



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Soldiers of Camp Taji patiently wait in line to enter the newest Army and Air Force Exchange Service facility Nov. 25. The new facility boasts 29,000 square feet of retail space, allowing AAFES to offer products and quantities previously unavailable at the camp.

a little bit of happiness and sense of the season to Soldiers as the come into this awesome new facility," said Pfc. Jefferey Braddy from Winston-Salem, N.C. assigned to Headquarters Detachment, 27th MSB.

Along with the ability to offer a wider selection of food, the new facility, features eight large-screen televisions and an additional five smaller television sets. The facility is decked out with sports memorabilia collected from high school, colleges and pro teams from the United States.

The facility is named the Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Cooke Sports Zone. It pays homage to the former command sergeant major of the 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, who was killed on Christmas Eve 2003 while visiting his Soldiers.

"We wanted to be able to provide a complete dining experience," Pasek said. "[It's] a location where Soldiers can come, get great food, enjoy the games being broadcast and just have a good time."

As the final speeches of the ceremony were made, troopers of the First Team's Horse Cavalry Detachment presented Hammond a ceremonial saber to cut a yellow ribbon, officially opening the facility.

During both ceremonies, Hammond presented certificates of appreciation and coins to Soldiers and civilians whose roles were critical in the timely completion of both facilities.

"All of you wearing this uniform need to give a special thanks to the civilians who have worked so hard to bring forth this miracle for us," Hammond said tugging at his jacket. "Unlike us, they all volunteered to be here and have done an incredible job making sure we are taken care of."



# 1-8 Cavalry Battalion Engineers Ur

Story and photos by Cpl. Bill Putnam  
122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AL RASHID DISTRICT, Baghdad -- Nearly every night since the toppling of the Hussein regime last year, insurgents have been using several roads in southern Baghdad's farming lands to launch attacks.

"They use the roads to conduct their rocket missions against the International Zone," said 1st Lt. William Woods, a platoon leader in Company B, 8th Engineer Battalion, referring to the palace complex of the Hussein regime and now site of the interim Iraqi government and U.S. Embassy in downtown Baghdad.

To deny those roads and essentially channel the insurgents into "kill zones," several of the roads and bridges the insurgents frequently used were blown by combat engineers from Company B, 8th Engineers, and Company B, 458th Engineer Battalion over several days in late November. They called it "Operation Thunderstruck." The operation got underway Nov. 27.

Blowing up the roads and bridges criss-crossing irrigation canals, farm fields and date palm groves in the rural areas south of Baghdad will delay or potentially stop insurgent attacks, Woods said.

The engineers went to six sites, destroying the roads and bridges using tools engineers love to use on the battlefield: cratering charges, mine-clearing line charges (MCLCs) and plastic explosives. In all, the engineers used nearly 15 tons of explosives over the course of the operation.

For the 8th Engineers' Bravo Company Soldiers, Thunderstruck was the first time they've been able to do their primary jobs since arriving in Baghdad in April.

Woods said his engineers were ready to finally get "their hands on some demolitions" and put their "expertise" to use.

"We're very excited," Woods said.

"Essentially what the blown roads would do is deny the enemy an easy way in and out of the area," said Staff Sgt. Kirt Allen, an engineer squad leader in Bravo, 8th Engineers. "Anyway we can immobilize them, helps us out. So, if we slow them down, that helps us out."

In other words, Allen explained, "... turn them into a kill zone."

Allen, a nine-year veteran of the combat engineers and multiple deployments and numerous exercises, said he's lost track of the number of times he's blown demolition.

This, though, is his first time "blowing stuff up" in a real world situation, he said.

But he said he wasn't too excited about it. He's done it so much he doesn't get excited until the explosion.

After his platoon set two charges, 200 and 600 pounds each, the adrenaline level rose for Allen as he blew up two bridges crossing canals.

"That was good stuff, man," he said after the second blast.

Allen and Woods' group did see one close call the first day, though. A car tried driving over the bridge after the timer fuse had been set. The vehicle stopped at one point, but the small maroon car began slowly rolling up to the bridge despite the engineers' arm waving and yelling.

With just under 30 seconds until the explosion, an engineer fired warning shots with an M-2 .50 caliber machine gun. The driver got the point and turned around.

"That would've been bad news if he hadn't stopped in time," Woods said.

A few seconds later, 600 pounds of explosives destroyed the bridge with a resounding boom and tower of flying dirt.

"Yeah!" several engineers said almost at once.

"That's how you blow stuff up," one of them said.



Staff Sgt. Kirt Allen and Staff Sgt. George Egan, squad leaders in Company B, 8th Engineers, are shown in a desert environment. They are wearing camouflage uniforms and helmets. Staff Sgt. Allen is holding a large spool of black detonation cord, and Staff Sgt. Egan is assisting him. They appear to be prepping a site for a demolition.



An engineer checks the sturdiness of the caps attached to the cratering charges.



Spc. Bradley Espinosa (left) and Pfc. Juan Aguilar, both Engineers with the 1-8 Cav., unload one of the 17 40-pound cratering charges they used to destroy two bridges at their site.



The engineers carefully burying the charges on the first bridge.



An engineer lends another a helping hand during the final digging of the four holes bored into the first of two bridges.



Spc. George Egan cuts detonation cord one of the two fuses.



# leash "Operation Thunder Struck"



Joseph Rodriguez, Engineers, unroll ammo at the blast



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arge.



cord before apply-



A combat engineer from Company B, 8th Engineer Battalion, watches another engineer operate the Bobcat excavator bore holes in the first of two bridges the company destroyed.



A 600-pound demolition charge explodes and destroys a bridge over a canal in the farmlands in southern Baghdad.



Engineers lower one of the cratering charges down into the hole. The demolition effort was carried out by Soldiers from the 8th and 458th engineer battalions, hoping to deny insurgents easy access to the city's center to carry out attacks.



# Red Team

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## Combined Forces "Stop the Rockets!"

By Capt. Jayson Morgan  
1-8 Cavalry Public Affairs

CAMP AL SAQR (FALCON), Baghdad, Iraq-- "Stop the rockets!" That's what Lt. Col. Jay Allen said as 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, kicked off Operation Rock Bottom, a three-day multinational force operation to clear its area of insurgents.

Task Force Mustangs was augmented with the brigade reconnaissance team (BRT) from the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team and a weapon's company

from 2-24 Marines. Engineer assets from the division, a ground penetrating radar team comprised of U.S., British, and Australian Soldiers and a company of Iraqi National Guard also helped.

For three days and nights, the task force searched areas where rockets have been fired. They placed a complex obstacle on a road that is known to have heavy weapons trafficking. Every house and farm was searched.

The BRT provided a screen on the flank, as the mortars conducted registration, ensuring their ability to have responsive fires.

The searches netted numerous small arms, 10 detainees, and three rockets. The message from 1-8 Cavalry was loud and clear: multinational forces will not hesitate to respond to attacks from the south.

The inclusion of Marines demonstrated to insurgents that the perceived "buffer zone" between the Marine Corps and Army's sector is not safe haven for them, Allen said.

Allen said more large-scale missions along with continued patrols in this region are critical to the safety of Baghdad.



Engineers emplace barriers on a road south of Baghdad.



U.S. Army photos courtesy 5th Brigade Combat Team

(Above) A mortar team from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment fills sandbags to fortify their position during the three-day Operation Rock Bottom, aimed at rounding up insurgents responsible for rocket attacks on Baghdad's International Zone.

### 5BCT Showcases CMO Project



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

Capt. Dan Ramos (left), the civil-military operations chief for 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, talks to Ambassador William Taylor and Maj. Gen. Robert Williamson, the director and deputy director of the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office, at the Al Rashid land fill Nov. 23, the first such land fill in Baghdad. Taylor and Williamson were visiting Baghdad's Al Rashid District to see how several reconstruction projects sponsored by the 5th Brigade Combat Team were proceeding. The land fill, Ramos said, would open for business by March 2005.

### Weapons Discovered in Mosque

By Cpl. Bill Putnam  
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL SAQR (FALCON), Baghdad, Iraq -- Soldiers from Company A, 304th Iraqi National Guard Battalion, searched a mosque in Baghdad's Al Rashid district after finding several mortar rounds in the parking lot next to the facility.

It was the second mosque the Soldiers have searched this week in Al Rashid's Abu Dascheer neighborhood.

The Iraqi Soldiers gained permission to search the Shuhada Mosque after seeing the 60-millimeter mortar round in the parking lot next to the mosque at 2 p.m.

After searching the parking lot's guard

shack, they found several weapons. The Soldiers entered the mosque compound itself and found weapons and insurgent propaganda.

Searchers of the mosque found the following: two AK-47s, one SKS machine gun, one 60mm mortar round, three drums of ammunition, four rocket-propelled grenade propellants, three gas masks, five bags of mortar propellants, and one RPG sight.

They also found a large supply of medicine and painkillers. Additionally, radios similar to the ones found on insurgents killed during a Nov. 9 firefight with 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, were found.



U.S. Army photo courtesy 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Part of the weapons cache uncovered during a recent Mosque search.



# Bowie Brigade

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## On Foot, the Preferred Method of Patrol

By Staff Sgt. Rebekah-mae Bruns  
39th BCT Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- Walking in Iraq is dicey, especially if you are an American. But walking is exactly what Soldiers are doing daily in Iraq as they patrol the dubious Iraq capital looking for roadside bombs and possible enemy positions. In fact, walking is the preferred method according to Sgt. 1st Class Alan Ezelle, 36, of Springfield, Ore.

"You can hear more and see more when you are walking," Ezelle said. "When you're rolling down the road [in a Humvee] there's only one guy who can see 360 degrees and that's your gunner."

Though Humvees provide protection against improvised explosive devices (IEDs), bullets, and rocket-propelled

grenades, they don't allow Soldiers to pick up the intimate details of their surroundings. The steel casing of the vehicle is a hard separation from clues on the ground that might lead to an IED or locals who want to give information on possible insurgents. So Soldiers get out and walk leaving the vehicles to trail them.

"We have a more 'hands on' approach", said Cpl. Steve Warming, 26, of Eugene, Ore. "Nearly every time we go outside the wire, we dismount [walk] in the city."

One of their most common patrols is what Soldiers call a deliberate route clearance. They take to the streets, generally before the morning sun comes up, and look for any IEDs, which were placed by insurgents to attack American and Iraqi convoys. They search the ground for evidence they would otherwise miss in a moving Humvee.

"There are so many things you can miss because of speed," Ezelle said.

Locals also have a tendency to approach Soldiers when they are on foot whether it's just to shake hands, give concerns about events or report information of suspicious activity in their area.

"Sometimes people come up and talk," Ezelle said. "We've gotten tips on where Ali Babbas [insurgents] are at."

Walking isn't easy though. There's extra weight to be carried. Soldiers wear a ballistic vest to guard against bullets and shrapnel and they carry weapons - sometimes two or three. It adds up quickly to a conservative 50 pounds. Throw in the ammunition, water,



Photos by Staff Sgt. Rebekah-mae Bruns, 39th BCT Public Affairs

Sgt. 1st Class Alan Ezelle of Springfield, Ore. and his medic Spc. Martin Miller traverse through a field of trash while patrolling the Baghdad area in Iraq.

Walking in an unpredictable city that without notice can promptly move from passive to volatile is unnerving. And though it stays in the back of their minds, Soldiers say they can't always focus on it.

"It's a conflict of interest," Warming said. "You can't worry about it all the time or you'll end up crawling in the corner and sucking your thumb. You've still got a job to do."

The danger is also ever present.



Sgt. 1st Class Alan Ezelle of Springfield, Ore. and Cpl. Steve Warming of Eugene, Ore., pause to look at a mill on the other side of the wall. Ezelle and Warming were investigating avenues of approach for the enemy.

## Command Post Exercise Prepares Iraqi Troops

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel  
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Officers of the 301st and 307th Iraqi National Guard Battalions, under the supervision of the First Team's 39th Brigade Combat Team, recently completed a three-day Command Post Exercise (CPX) at Camp Taji designed to enhance the fighting effectiveness of Iraqi Security Forces.

The main objective of the CPX is to teach staff-level officers how to work together. As American Soldiers know and the Iraqi Soldiers are learning, a command staff is broken down into sections. Each section is responsible for one piece of an operation for example; one section is responsible for intelligence, another for civil military operations and so on.

"[The ING officers] are at the point in their training cycle where an exercise of this nature is appropriate," said Maj. Michael Warrington from Sherwood, Ore., an observer controller with 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment. "It allows them to take what we've taught them so far and apply it as well as giving us, the

trainers, a chance to see where we might need to focus some of our attention in future training sessions."

This was the second CPX the 39th BCT has hosted for the ING since assuming responsibility for their training. While the staff has improved since their first exercise, Warrington said the group was still in the "crawl" phase.

"We're using the Army training methodology of crawl, walk, run...and we are still very much in the crawl phase," he said. "With that in mind, the main focus of this CPX isn't necessarily on the correct resolution of battlefield scenarios, right now we're more concerned with getting the staff to work together effectively."

Warrington explained that for many of the ING staff officers, old counter-productive mentalities existed. This was a problem that was addressed early in the exercise.

"In the old regime, information was power," he said. "So officers learned very quickly to keep information to themselves. That's counter to everything we teach and how we operate, so very early on in the exercise we addressed the

issue stressing the importance of sharing information between the sections."

Each day the exercise stops long enough for the observers and staff officers to conduct an after action review (AAR). The group analyzes what went well and what did not and then proposes solutions to the problems.

"The stopping each day to



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122MPAD

A 301st Iraqi National Guard Battalion planning officer (right) plots updated information received from an intelligence officer (left) during a Command Post Exercise

analyze what we did wrong really helps," said the 301st ING Battalion's planning officer. "I've learned that I can make mistakes here and that it's okay, we're learning and getting better each time."

By end of the second day of the exercise, the sections were working with each other to address and solve one of the many problems that affect a fighting army.

"We've given them scenarios straight out of what we've dealt with here," said North Little Rock, Ark. resident Sgt. Maj. Roger Easley, brigade operations sergeant major. "Things like setting up a traffic control point and then while they're conveying their forces out to the location we hit them with an [improvised explosive device] so they then have to react to that."

Easley is part of the exercise's White Cell. In the operation, the White Cell is responsible for giving the battalions problems they must face.

"The White Cell acts as a brigade level entity; issuing orders, or problems, down to the battalion level," said Maj. Michael Spraggins, CPX coordinator and brigade fire support officer. "It is then the responsibility of the battal-

ion to issue orders and guidance down to their subordinate units as well as report back to the brigade element what their plan of action is."

In the White Cell, the walls are covered with paper tracking the time difference of problems issued to tasking acknowledgement, how it was handled and whether the necessary reports needed for each action had been received.

"Both battalions as a whole are doing very well," Spraggins said. "They're doing a very good job of writing reports and showing themselves to be good decision makers."

Warrington agreed that the officers are doing well with the training but said that the exercise was a learning experience for both the U.S. Soldiers as well as the ING Soldiers.

"The ING are handling some of the situations in ways we wouldn't," he said. "They have a knowledge gained from this being their home; understanding the local traditions, power structures...things like that and we are learning ways to perhaps adjust our tactics. So this has been a learning experience for everyone."

# Commandos

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## British Soldier Serves with American Unit

By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin  
10th Mnt. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP AL TAHREER (LIBERTY)-- On an average sweltering summer's day in Iraq, an intercom in the tactical operation center screeched in preparation for an announcement.

"Attention in the TOC," the voice said in a thick British accent. "The daily (order) is now posted. God save the Queen!"

The voice belonged to Maj. John Wright, a British plans officer with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Wright's diverse experience with both British and American militaries makes him a valuable asset to the plans team.

Wright volunteered to work with American forces through an exchange program with the United Kingdom and the United States. He and his wife and three children moved to Fort Drum, N.Y. and Wright began working for the 10th Mountain Division. He served in Afghanistan training the Afghan National Army. There he met and worked for Col. Mark Milley, 2nd Brigade Combat Team commander. When 2nd BCT received confirmation that they were going to Iraq, Milley requested that Wright come with them. Wright enthusiastically agreed.

"I knew we were doing good things in Iraq and I wanted to be a part of it," Wright said. "I wanted to see the world's super-power at work."

Wright is no stranger to combating terrorism. Aside from serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan, he also served as a company commander in Northern Ireland. Wright said the United Kingdom has a



U.S. Army Photo

Maj. John Wright, British exchange Officer with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division poses on patrol with fellow Commando Brigade Soldiers Maj. Craig Smith and Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney. Wright is deployed with 2nd Brigade for OIF 2.

common cause with the United States in the war on terrorism.

"It's not just the United States' war. It is a war against terrorism," he said. "We had potential terrorist attacks in the UK. They were fortunately stopped. We are just as much a target. Everyone in the free world has to assume responsibilities for their freedom."

Wright said he enjoys working with American Soldiers. Sgt. Matthew Crowder, a plans non-commissioned officer, said 2nd BCT has also enjoyed and benefited from Wright's expertise.

"He gives us a different perspective," Crowder said. "He gives us a different way to look at a problem other than the traditional plans process. When we reach a

road block, having an outside view gets you thinking about a different way to view things."

Wright's personality, especially his dry humor, is also a welcome relief from the daily pressures of a combat zone, said Staff Sgt. Robert Ross, plans NCOIC.

"He's a very good guy," Ross said. "He's very lighthearted. He keeps the stress level down in stressful times."

"The stories he tells really lighten the mood," Crowder added. "But when it comes down to work, he's all business. He makes sure the mission is accomplished. He's a very hard worker who is tireless in how he tackles projects."

Wright also said his American counterparts are learning to deal with his

"quirks and eccentricities," referring to sayings and mannerisms foreign to Americans.

"He says regular British sayings, slang terms that most people don't understand that we now understand," Crowder said.

"They're basically all dirty," Ross said, about the new slang terms Wright taught his fellow Soldiers. "If we didn't see James Bond movies, we'd have no idea what he was saying."

Despite differences in language and culture, Wright said American and British Soldiers share similar work ethics and beliefs.

"They're enthusiastic, dedicated and professional Soldiers," Wright said. "Our countries are very similar. I enjoyed working with our allies. It's been a worthwhile experience. It was good to be here, a great opportunity. I made some good friends."

Crowder agreed that working with Wright was a rewarding experience. The combined effort of Coalition forces will also reap benefits for both sides, he said.

"Working hand-in-hand shows it wasn't just the U.S. fighting alone," Crowder said. "It's reassuring that even in the hard times, we have someone watching our backs."

Wright said British and American forces have the same intentions in Iraq—they both want to create a safe and secure environment for the people of Iraq to thrive in.

"We're doing the right thing," Wright said. "We do it for the Iraqi people to have a chance to prosper in peace without fear. We're sincere in our efforts. If we don't follow through (in Iraq), there will be anarchy. A rogue state would be created. We have to succeed here."

## Troops Train Despite Danger

By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin  
10th Mtn. Div. PAO

CAMP AL TAHREER (LIBERTY)-- In the outskirts of Baghdad, the sounds of mortar rounds and tank blasts echo over a barren desert and Soldiers fight invisible enemies. It sounds like a war, but the ammunition fired is not from the heat of battle but rather a controlled training environment.

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, are supporting the Butler Range Compound. The service they provide allows units stationed in Iraq, as well as Iraqi forces, to conduct vital training, said Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney, 2 BCT command sergeant major.

"Even though we're in a combat situation, it doesn't negate the fact that training needs to be done," Mahoney said. "Training never stops. There are still personnel to train and refresh on tactics, tech-

niques and procedures."

Soldiers from 2 BCT provide force protection security for the small, isolated training base by guarding its perimeter. This frees units to conduct training without incident, said Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Jones, force protection non-commissioned officer in charge of Butler Range.

"All types of units do all their good things out here," Jones said. "They do everything from small-arms-live fire to mortar firing to tank calibration," Jones said. "We provide security for everybody. Someone had to protect the range."

Jones said conducting frequent patrols, on-post security as well as providing a quick reaction force for nearby Camp Rustamayah are but some of his Soldier's responsibilities.

The small number of 2 BCT Soldiers have been separated from their units for about a month. The desolate environment, far from their

home base hinders communicating with their parent units. That is why Mahoney and Command Sgt. Maj. William Morgan, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment sergeant major visited their Soldiers Nov. 17.

"The command visit is to check on the Soldiers to make sure they have everything they need," Mahoney said. "We don't want Soldiers to feel like they're forgotten."

Soldiers from 2 BCT had requests and suggestions for changes for the sergeants major, but they were upbeat about the general living conditions and security.

"People like to come out here," Jones said. "It's alert but relaxing."

Mahoney said he is proud of his Soldiers in all corners of Iraq. Every Soldier has a job, and Soldiers at Butler Range are doing their part to ensure stability in Iraq.

"They're doing a very important job and are supporting the unit and the Army," he said.



By Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD

A Soldier prepares to fire on Butler range as part of ongoing training that keeps him ready to respond to combat threats.



# Tiger Brigade

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## Tiger Brigade Medics Treat All Equally

By Spc. Erin Robicheaux  
256th BCT Public Affairs

CAMP AL-TAHREER (LIBERTY), Baghdad, Iraq -- The worst case Staff Sgt. Robert Trahan has seen at his medical clinic since being here has been a gunshot wound to the stomach which resulted in evisceration. After the patient arrived in Trahan's Troop Medical Clinic (TMC), he was stabilized and bandaged up. Currently, the man is in the intensive care unit, but he is stable. This medical maneuver is an accomplishment for the staff, but this was no ordinary patient.

This man was an insurgent. "Everyone has their rules of engagement, and the health care profession of the Army is no different," said Trahan, the clinic's non-commissioned officer in charge with Charlie Med, 199th Forward Support Battalion of the 256th Brigade Combat Team. "Whatever happens out there doesn't matter. Once the Soldier or insurgent hits our door, they become our patient. It's our job to care for them and do everything possible to save their life."

The patient who was recently cared for by Charlie Med 199th was firing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) at U.S. Soldiers. The Soldiers returned fire, hitting him in the stomach. A small group of Soldiers who were involved in the firefight were outside the clinic and at first protested to the care of their counterpart.

"Once we consoled the Soldiers and made them understand that this is our job, they were fine," Trahan said. "They sat outside and were calm about the situation."

The clinic is a Level II treatment facility, which means that it is equipped to handle everything just shy of surgery. There is always a doctor on duty, or on call. On site there is a lab, an x-ray room, a trauma center, a dentist's office, and on Fridays there is a licensed therapist on duty. If surgery is required, patients are medically evacuated to the 31st Combat Support Hospital ... moments away by helicopter.

Staff Sgt. Cory McClinton worked on an ambulance as a civilian, but he said being a medic in the Tiger Brigade in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III is the learning experience of a lifetime.

"I want to pursue a career in the medical field and now is the best time for knowledge," he said.

McClinton, who runs the clinic's day shift, said there is no such thing as a normal day. Though there is a routine that revolves around sick call hours, the patients that come in and out of the TMC on a daily basis make life interesting for the staff.

"We see a lot of problems that are common for people who are new to this type of climate, such as respiratory infections, vomiting, and diarrhea," he said. "Then you have the Soldier who comes in with an allergic reaction like we've never seen, to something that we



By Spc. Erin Robicheaux, 256th BCT Public Affairs  
Staff Sgt. Robert Trahan and Staff Sgt. Cory McClinton conduct a function check on a ProPak 12 at the 199th Forward Support Battalion's Troop Medical Clinic.

just can't figure out. It makes you wonder what they have out here."

The Charlie Med TMC is under constant renovations. On the backside of the building, the medical personnel are hoping to have a triage area set up before long and they are also doing a lot of interior decorating including painting and basic sterilization of the facility.

The staff is also getting an abundance of new equipment that

will help them provide the best care possible for the patients.

"We are getting five ProPaks, which takes all vitals of the individual and will free the medic to perform other pertinent tasks," Trahan said.

The facility will also acquire two new electrocardiogram machines and will continue to receive new equipment throughout the duration of the deployment.

Trahan claims that he and his staff are fully charged and dedicated to their mission to take care of the Soldiers of the Tiger Brigade, or any human being who walks through their doors.

"We'll do everything that we can to save life, limb, or eyesight," McClinton added. "We all love helping people and find enjoyment in what we do."

## Acting safely is ...

- An attitude, not a checklist
- A full-time job
- Everyone's responsibility
- Protecting our resources



## Tiger Brigade Hosts Turkey Feast



Photos by Sgt. Thomas Benoit, 256th BCT Public Affairs

256th Brigade Combat Team Soldier, Spc. John Graham (left), and several Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) employees portray early American settlers beside a contractor-built, scale-replica of the Mayflower for the newly-dedicated Tiger Den Dining Facility on Camp Tigerland for the Thanksgiving Day festivities.



Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, hands out coins to Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery Regiment during a Thanksgiving Day visit to the Louisiana National Guard unit at Camp Tigerland in Baghdad Nov. 25.



## Thanksgiving Day Events Inspire Appetites



Photos by Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Soldiers of Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, participate in a 10-kilometer Turkey Trot as part of Thanksgiving Day activities on Camp Taji Nov 25.



(Above) Spc Jackie Cupples (left) from Dewitt, Ark. with the 39th Support Battalion, 39th Brigade Combat Team, and Spc. Joann Valdez of San Antonio, Texas, of Headquarters Detachment, 27th Main Support Battalion, Division Support Command, 1st Cavalry Division, dress the part of a pilgrim couple celebrating the traditional first Thanksgiving as part of a display sponsored by DISCOM entitled, "Thanksgivings: Past, Present and Future" on Camp Taji Nov 25.

(Left) Officers of the 1st Cavalry Division help serve a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to Soldiers of Camp Taji at the brand-new Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Cooke Sports Zone.

## 'Bass Boss' Visits Anglers at Camp Prosperity

By Staff Sgt. Susan German  
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-IZDEHAR (PROSPERITY), Baghdad, Iraq -- For those who love fishing, Baghdad has an impressive number of fishing holes, something you might not expect when you think of the desert and sand of the Middle East.

The only thing missing in those lakes, when you're the founder of the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS), are the bass.

The "Bass Boss," Ray Scott, who promotes the world of bass fishing from his home state of Alabama, brought his "Iraq Thanksgiving Tour 2004" to Camp Prosperity, a U.S. military camp in Baghdad, where the lakes actually have names, like Fish Lake and Deer Lake. Camp Prosperity is home to the 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, from Washington state's 81st Infantry Brigade, attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

The tour was sponsored by Armed Forces Entertainment (AFE) and allowed the group to meet with Soldiers stationed in Kuwait and Iraq. Prior to their arrival at Camp Prosperity, they were scheduled to meet with wounded Soldiers at the 31st Combat Support Hospital in the International Zone.

One quality that fishermen seem to share is patience. Two of Scott's biggest fans waited patiently all morning for his arrival. Several came with their fishing poles. Most had shared a love for the sport since their childhood.

Despite the lack of fancy rods and reels you see in the magazines or on television, Staff Sgt. James Mastrodomenico, a mortar section sergeant with the "Polar Bears" of Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, from Lake George, N.Y., successfully fished with "550 guts" and a safety pin while stationed at Camp Victory North (now known as Camp Liberty). Since coming to work at Camp Prosperity, his gear has evolved somewhat.

His fishing pole is an old broomstick.

With morning temperatures in the low 40s, the lake water was still cold at noon, as Mastrodomenico and fellow Soldiers did their best to entice the fish with bread and potato chips to come up to the surface. Every once in a while a small fish nibbled at the soggy fare, causing a ripple to move across the lake. They hoped to attract enough fish so that Scott might be talked into fishing when he did arrive. Mastrodomenico had caught a big one earlier that morning, he said.

Scott didn't have time to fish while he was in Iraq, but offered \$100 cash to any Soldier who could catch a fish with hook and line while he was there. The fish weren't biting, weren't even making an appearance, for whatever reason. Maybe that can only be understood by other fishermen.

Scott and his colleagues visited with the Soldiers and gave them hats, copies of Scott's book "Bass Boss." They also autographed cards and photographs, posed for pictures and offered free "Bassmaster" magazine subscriptions to the Soldiers.

Spc. Timothy Mooney, a Bradley gunner with Company A, 1-161 Infantry from Bremerton, Wash., brought his own gift to the meeting with Scott.

"We designed a patch with the words 'The Iraqi Hunting and Fishing Club' before I came to Iraq," Mooney said. "Instead of the infantry crossed rifles, we did a crossed rifle and a fishing rod, we had them designed before we came here, and they were done by the time we got here."

Mooney provided several of his patches to Scott and his group, who were excited to receive them. Scott encouraged Mooney to keep in touch.

In addition to the tour, Cayton discussed a part of the welcome home celebration being planned for 1st Cav. Div. Soldiers returning from Iraq. Private donors have donated a \$30,000 bass boat made specially for the Cav. that is painted solid yellow with a black stripe, yellow seats, grey carpet and a horse's head, to

be given to a 1st Cav. Div. Soldier returning from Iraq. Donations will be taken and the money will go towards a scholarship program for the children or spouses of Soldiers killed in Iraq.

In the end, no one collected the \$100 prize, but some American heroes were able to meet an American icon. For a few hours they shared a passion and common ground. They call it fishing.



By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

"Bass Boss" Ray Scott shares fishing tips with Staff Sgt. James Mastrodomenico, (front) and Pfc. Josh Lyon on how to catch a carp during a "meet-and-greet" at Camp Prosperity in Baghdad.



## Division Medics Teach Vital Lifesaving Skills

By Spc. Al Barrus  
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-TAHREER (LIBERTY), Baghdad, Iraq -- "Who here doesn't know what traumatic cardiopulmonary arrest is?" asks the instructor. No hands rise, and the instructor is pleased.

Who does know what it means? A medic does.

Making sure medics know how to recognize and treat (and pronounce) such injuries as penetrating thoracic trauma, and retroperitoneal hemorrhaging is part of the 32-hour Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support class routinely given to Task Force Baghdad medics.

"This course is very vital for pre-hospital care," said Sgt. 1st Class Richshell Lott, an instructor in the division surgeon section. "These people are the first responders to go to an injury or illness. This course gives them the basic skills to properly manage that casualty and refer them to the proper medical facility."

While some of the 12 medics are taking the class as a refresher, it's also a way for old generation medics to get on par with the Army's new combat medic standard, he said.

The course covered some advanced paramedical skills, such as performing different types of resuscitation and learning which intravenous fluids to administer. It primarily focused on identifying injuries, and which medical care

level a patient needs to arrive at, Lott said.

The new combat medic military occupational specialty in the Army is designated 91W, and includes pre-hospital trauma life support in initial special-

ty training. The old generation of medics, formerly known as 91B, are now designated 91W-Y2, Lott said.

"We are looking to drop that Y2 identifier, and making them full-fledged 91Ws," the Mililani, Hawaii, native said.

Lott said this course is especially important to medics performing their duties in a combat zone.

"You need to know how to identify life threatening situations wherever you are trying to treat a casualty," he explained. "You need to identify how that person is suffering. You need to be able to manage the [medical] problem. You need to [ensure] they get transported, or call in a (medical evacuation) so [the patient] can get to the proper facility."

Teaching the course is not only a fun experience, but fulfilling on a grander scale, Lott said.

"I like the personal gratification I get when I can see the students understand what we've been teaching them and they can apply that," he concluded. "They can leave this classroom and feel confident that they can manage any emergency medical situation and make the proper referrals. I like to see that."



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Erb (left) and Sgt. Brett Campbell, both medics in 458th Engineer Battalion, listen carefully with text books open during a pre-hospital trauma life support course.

### Our Fallen Troops

Sgt. Joseph Nolan  
Spc. David Roustum  
Staff Sgt. Christian Engeldrum  
Spc. Blain Ebert  
Pfc. Wilfredo Urbina  
Sgt. Pablo Calderon  
Sgt. Jose Guereca  
Pfc. Cole Larsen  
Spc. David Fisher



## Supply Soldiers Keep Bowie Outfitted

Cpl. Benjamin Cossel  
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - From office supplies, to combat boots, war is hell on equipment. Without the right equipment, performing one's mission at best can be difficult...at worst, impossible. With operations that run around the clock, Soldiers of the Headquarters Company and 239th Military Intelligence Company supply sections ensure Bowie Brigade troopers always have the proper equipment.

The sign attached to the wooden fence in front of the nondescript warehouse belies the buildings true purpose. "Welcome to Little Rock!" the stenciled letters read, the only indication that this particular warehouse is different on the long stretch of road dotted with similar buildings.

"We run a consolidated warehouse operation out of this building," explained Jonesboro, Ark. resident Staff Sgt. Chris Baker, supply noncommissioned officer in charge with the 239th Military Intelligence Company, 39th Brigade Combat Team. "From here, the 239th MI Co. and the Brigade's HHC (Headquarters Company) are responsible for the issue, maintenance and accounting of all OCIE (Organizational Clothing, Individual Equipment)."

Issuing of gear to Soldiers is



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Staff Sgt. Charles Baker of Jonesboro, Ark. (left) and Spc. Peter Favazza, from Sacramento, Ca., both with the 239th Military Intelligence Company, 39th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division inventory gear left by a Soldier returning to home station.

just one piece of the multi-faceted mission of the joint supply section.

"Along with issuing equipment, the supply section is responsible for the final accountability of all equipment within the company," said Sgt. Ellett Quarles a resident of Marvell, Ark. and the supply sergeant with Headquarters Company, 39th BCT. "We're the guys who keep the company commander out of trouble."

For every piece of gear that a Soldier receives, a sheet of paper in the form of a hand receipt accompanies the issue. Ultimately, the commander of a unit is responsible for those items

on his property book. Quarles explained it is the job of the supply sergeant to make sure the necessary paperwork is in proper order and every piece of gear is accounted for.

"So we have the documentation and records that we are charged with maintaining," Quarles said. "Of course we make supply runs to Camp Anaconda on a regular basis to restock our supplies as well as obtaining equipment for Soldiers that we don't carry here on Camp Taji."

With all that the supply section is responsible for, having a good team of Soldiers is essential to a smooth operation.

"Were it not for the great group of Soldiers I have working for me," said Baker, "we would never be able to keep up with the pace working in a combat zone requires us to maintain."

As Soldiers of the brigade run 24-hour operations, to meet their obligation, the supply section too must run around the clock ensuring Soldiers needs are met. That need, coupled with obligations outside their daily duties has presented challenges for the section.

"Running 24 hours, giving up people from my section to stand local national watch, do rotations working on the tower, it can put a strain on your operations," Quarles said. "But everyone here is making sacrifices and stepping up to the plate and with a lot of hard work, we are accomplishing our mission."

The long hours, the shuffling of people, convoys and monthly inventories, all add up for a long tiring day, but at the end of it, Quarles noted, it's the job satisfaction that keeps him and his Soldiers going.

"Knowing that we are able to help people, help them get what they need..."

For all of us, that's the thrill and satisfaction of this job, getting that something difficult for someone that makes their life easier or lets them perform their mission easier, that makes us all smile and keeps us moving."

## Superhero Flick Packs 'Incredible' Wallop

Pixar and Disney's new computer-animated movie "The Incredibles" is not only the best computer-animated movie yet made, but it also stands as one of the best superhero movies yet.

Part homage to, and part deconstruction of, comic book superheroes, "The Incredibles" takes place in a world where superheroes have gone into hiding because they are no longer welcome, having apparently caused more trouble than good (much like superheroes in the "X-Men" universe).

The movie follows the Incredible family, a family of former superheroes headed by Mr. Incredible (voiced by Craig T. Nelson) and his wife Elastigirl (Holly Hunter) and their two kids, Violet the invisible girl and Dash, as they are forced out of their suburban exile to once again confront a villainous mastermind, Syndrome (Jason Lee).

And in a nice touch, Samuel L. "The Man" Jackson performs in a small but cool part as Frozone, a friend of Mr. Incredible's and fellow retired superhero.

Superficially, "The Incredibles" sounds like your regular comic book movie, but it's what stirs beneath the basic plot that really sets this one apart from the pack.

If Quentin Tarantino used his "Kill Bill" movies to pay homage to, and improve upon Kung Fu flicks and

### LeDrew's Reviews

Spc. Erik LeDrew

Movie Critic



Spaghetti Westerns, then writer-director Brad Bird uses "The Incredibles" to pay tribute to and improve upon not only superhero movies, but many of the so-called "geek classics" as well, cribbing concepts and shots from "Return of the Jedi," "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and several of the James Bond movies.

It is a tribute to Bird and the technical geniuses at Pixar that they are able to slide these nods to past movies into "The Incredibles" without ever making it feel blatant. For that matter, those that aren't film fanatics probably wouldn't be able to spot them anyway.

Although "The Incredibles" feels as alive and whimsical as any veteran filmmaker's magnum opus, this movie is only director Brad Bird's second feature. Before this, he made an under-seen but by all-accounts magnificent animated movie called "The Iron Giant" about a boy and his 50-foot tall robot (which



Photo courtesy Disney/Pixar

Pixar's new animated movie "The Incredibles," pits a superhero crime-fighting family against a supervillain and pays tribute to the genre.

incidentally, was voiced by Vin Diesel before the world knew the guy's name).

Now that Bird has been brought into the Pixar fold, the fold of a filmmaking company known for making computer-animated movies (the "Toy Story" movies, "A Bug's Life," "Monsters Inc.," and "Finding Nemo") that are actually good films-and not just good money-makers.

While "The Incredibles" may not

make the gargantuan sum of money that "Shrek 2" made earlier this year, it is on track to make a gargantuan sum of money and between the two of them, it is easily the best.

In fact, I would say that "The Incredibles" is not only the best computer-animated movie yet (even better than my personal favorite "Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius"), it is simply one of the best films of the year.

## Cavalry Troops Take to Thanksgiving Day Gridiron



As a cool breeze bit into the sunny Thanksgiving Day air on Forward Operating Base Independence in Baghdad, Soldiers from Company A, 215th Forward Support Battalion walked away with a 26-19 victory over the Company A, 8th Engineer Battalion "Scorpions" during the Task Force 1-9 Cavalry's flag football championships Nov. 25. (Above) Scorpions defensive lineman Sgt. Karl Stark falls as he rips the green flags from Spc. Shawn Wilson, 215th FSB.



Photos by Sgt. John Queen, 3rd BCT Public Affairs

(Above) In an effort to gain yardage, Cpl. Casey Kimes passes the ball to Scorpions offensive lineman Sgt. Brad Penman, #5. (Below) Scorpions center Spc. Aaron Craven hikes the ball to the team's quarterback, Cpl. Casey Kimes.

